

Ethical Consumption in Germany

A Cross-Sectional Analysis of Determinants of Fair Trade Consumption (2000–2010)

Veronika A. Andorfer*

Universität Kassel, FG Soziologie Ländlicher Räume, Steinstr. 19, 37213 Witzenhausen, Germany
andorfer@uni-kassel.de

Summary: The study investigates determinants of self-reported Fair Trade (FT) consumption in Germany. Narrow conceptions of social action according to which economic constraints are decisive are complemented with theoretical considerations that point to the social function of ethical consumption. The effects of income, social status, attitudes, and personal values are analyzed. For the empirical analyses, cross-sectional data from the biennial general population survey, “Environmental Awareness in Germany”, are used. The results based on six consecutive surveys from 2000 to 2010, suggest that the resource dependence of FT consumption cannot be ignored, for income has proved to be a relevant determinant in almost all multivariate models. However, the findings also lead to the conclusion that social status, the FT specific attitude, general environmental concerns as well as solidarity and religiousness are important determinants. The study points to FT consumption as a form of middle- and upper-class distinction.

Keywords: Ethical Consumption; Fair Trade; Survey Data; Social Status; Social Class.

Zusammenfassung: Diese Studie analysiert im Rahmen einer Sekundäranalyse Einflussfaktoren selbstberichteten „Fair Trade“(FT)-Konsums in Deutschland und verwendet dafür Querschnittsdaten einer Bevölkerungsumfrage zum Thema „Umweltbewusstsein in Deutschland“. Theoretische Ansätze, bei denen vor allem die finanziellen Restriktionen der Konsumenten relevant sind, werden um Einflussfaktoren ergänzt, die die soziale Funktion ethischen Konsums in den Blick nehmen. Auf der Basis von sechs aufeinanderfolgenden Umfragen zwischen 2000 und 2010 werden Einflussfaktoren für selbstberichtete Zahlungsbereitschaft und Präferenz für FT-Produkte untersucht. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass die finanziellen Ressourcen bei der Erklärung des Konsums von FT-Produkten nicht zu vernachlässigen sind. Jedoch finden sich auch Hinweise, dass spezifische FT-Einstellungen, allgemeines Umweltbewusstsein sowie Solidarität und Religiosität als persönliche Werte wichtige Einflussfaktoren darstellen. Die Studie zeigt zudem die Relevanz des Statuskonsums für den Konsum ethischer Produkte auf.

Schlagworte: Ethischer Konsum; Fair Trade; Umfragedaten; Sozialer Status; Soziale Klassen.

1 Introduction

Investigating phenomena of searching, purchasing, using, and disposing goods or services to satisfy a wide range of needs has come a long way in sociology.¹ While research on consumer behavior has

never been quite at the center of attention of (economic) sociology (Hellmann 2010; Rössel 2010; Zukin & Maguire 2004), already Max Weber (1980/1922) and Georg Simmel (1989/1900) referred to the role of consumption in their seminal works on the rise of capitalism and the development of modern ways of life. Analyzing diverse phenomena of consumption in relation to sociological concepts such as identity (e.g., Bauman 1988; Giddens 1991), social status and class (e.g., Bourdieu 1984; Veblen 1899), life styles (e.g., Peterson & Kern 1996; Schulze 1992), rationalization processes (e.g., Ritzer 2010), or collective action (e.g., Friedman 1999; Micheletti 2010), scholars in the social sciences have pointed to the relevance of consumption for social life and social order in contemporary societies.

Within this field of research, ethical consumption highlights the importance of individuals' moral mo-

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¹ From a sociological perspective, consumption need not be limited to the (economic) act of spending one's income for goods and services but can comprise a rather wide range of phenomena connected to consumers considerations, what they communicate, evaluate, and how they act (Hellmann 2010: 388f.).

tives for their consumption practices; it denotes consumers who satisfy their needs and are at the same time mindful of the consequences their consumption practices have on other human beings, animals, and the environment (Harrison et al. 2007). The purchase of Fair Trade (FT) commodities – meant to improve the living and working conditions of small-scale producer cooperatives in developing countries – is a recent and quite prominent manifestation of ethical consumption in the everyday (Nicholls & Opal 2005); it has initiated an interdisciplinary debate with contributions from such diverse fields as agronomy, consumer studies and marketing, economics, geography, political science, and psychology.

Sociology has only recently started to engage in this field of research which is dominated by theoretical considerations that conceptualize restrictions in consumers' resources as a crucial determinant; FT products often come with an ethical premium and are thus more expensive than conventional products. From a sociological perspective, however, economic constraints do not suffice to explain FT consumption. For example, scholars investigate how attitudes of FT consciousness and social and personal norms are interlinked with economic constraints (Sunderer & Rössel 2012); they highlight the importance of consumer identity as a means to express and to construct self-meaning as moral persons (e.g., Varul 2010); they also point to concepts of social status and distinction (e.g., Adams & Raisborough 2008).

Methodologically, the majority of studies on FT consumption are based on convenience or purposive samples; most studies are carried out in the U.S. and the UK, limiting the generalizability of results and suggesting a cultural bias in the field of research (see Andorfer & Liebe (2012) for an overview).

The present study contributes to the research on FT consumption in two ways. First, research on Germany is scarce, even more so when it comes to the general population. Therefore, cross-sectional data from a general population survey on "Environmental Awareness in Germany" are used in the empirical analyses. This study is one of three in Germany based on a random sample and the only one with national-level data.² Second, moving beyond explanations of consumers' Preisendörfer 2007; Opp

² In their study on FT consumption, Sunderer & Rössel (2012) use a random sample from the city of Cologne. Ziehlberg & Alvensleben (1998) base their empirical findings on a random sample from the city of Kiel.

1999; Sunderer & Rössel 2012). Using six replications of the survey conducted every two years between 2000 and 2010, propositions are tested with multiple data sets, which allows assessing the stability of effects.

This article is structured as follows: As an introduction to the topic an extended definition of Fair Trade and a short (historical) synopsis of the Fair Trade movement in Germany are given (2). The relevant theoretical concepts are introduced and testable propositions are derived (3) and details on the background of the study and methods are given (4). The presentation of empirical findings begins with a discussion of descriptive results (5). Subsequently, all six data sets are analyzed, followed by an in-depth analysis of the 2008 survey data. In the penultimate section of the paper, results are summarized and limitations of the present analysis are discussed (6). The conclusion highlights several theoretical implications for future research (7).

2 Background on Fair Trade

Fair Trade aims at the long-term improvement of the living and working conditions of small-scale producer cooperatives and workers in developing countries. Basic objectives may include bans on illegal child labor and forced labor, promotion of safe and healthy working conditions, and securing workers' rights (Nicholls & Opal 2005). So far, there is no widely accepted definition of FT as there are a wide variety of actors and organizations – such as producers, trading companies, certification bodies, pressure groups, NGOs, retailers, wholesalers, and consumers – involved at the national and international level (Moore 2004).³ Moreover, the product line-up is quite heterogeneous with both unlabeled and certified labeled commodities available in supermarkets and one world specialty shops. Nevertheless, food and handicrafts are often understood to be fairly traded if producer coopera-

³ The European Fair Trade Association (EFTA) supports a definition of the international Fair Trade movement of Fair Trade as "[...] a trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency and respect, that seeks greater equity in international trade. It contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to, and securing the rights of, marginalized producers and workers – especially in the South. Fair Trade organisations (backed by consumers) are engaged actively in supporting producers, awareness raising and in campaigning for changes in the rules and practice of conventional international trade." (EFTA 2006).

tives, workers or small-scale farmers in developing countries are guaranteed fair prices which cover their production costs. FT products such as tea, coffee, or bananas may include a social premium which producer cooperatives can invest in sustainable production modes and community projects to alleviate poverty (Nicholls & Opal 2005).

Historically, FT networks linking producer cooperatives in developing countries with consumers in Western affluent countries started out as part of a wider social movement for alternative trade regimes after World War II (Fridell 2007; Moore 2004). Criticizing the protectionism of industrialized countries in the agricultural sector, advocates of Fair Trade ask for a more balanced integration of developing countries in international trade and long-term strategies in order to promote socially sustainable supply chains (Hauff & Claus 2012).

FT network initiatives began to sell products in the U.S. (e.g., Ten Thousand Villages) and in the UK (e.g., Oxfam) in the late 1940s and early 1950s, mostly motivated by religious and charitable considerations as well as by a desire to get affluent consumers interested in the situation of farmers and workers in developing countries (Raschke 2009; Hauff & Claus 2012: 85). German FT initiatives became politically active in the early 1970s and subsequently evolved into a movement of solidarity with developing countries (Hauff & Claus 2012: 87). In 1975, the German GEPA “Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Partnerschaft mit der Dritten Welt mbH” was founded by Christian aid organizations and church-related institutions (Raschke 2009). The import of FT commodities gained momentum, and around 40 world shops (FairTrade e.V. 2012), mostly run by volunteers, sold FT products in Germany at this time. By the early 1990s, FT products were not only sold in more than 600 world shops (FairTrade e.V. 2012) but also in supermarkets. To ensure compliance with FT standards, the German FT labeling institution “TransFair” was founded in 1992 – a turning point for the movement as its increasing professionalization moved its political and social concerns to the background (Hauff & Claus 2012: 89f.). By the end of the 1990s, FT became mainstream with the standardization of certification procedures that facilitated the integration of conventional businesses. During the 2000s, several public events and campaigns, such as “Faire Woche” and “fair feels good”, were initiated to raise awareness among German consumers. Distribution channels diversified when discounter supermarkets started selling FT products in 2006. At this point at the latest, a clear division between the political ba-

sis of the social FT movement and the increasing commercialization of FT marketing was established (Hauff & Claus 2012: 92).

3 Theoretical considerations

So far, the interdisciplinary debate on FT consumption has not resulted in an integrated theory; rather, a variety of more or less loosely connected determinants persists – as is the case for ethical consumption in general (cf. Lewis & Potter 2011). Sociologists engaging in the field are intrigued by which determinants – other than consumers’ resources – are relevant for explaining individual FT consumption. The subsequent theoretical considerations hence complement narrow models of social action according to which preferences and economic constraints are decisive with determinants that point to the social function of ethical consumption and are linked to wider models of social action – namely social status, attitudes, and personal values.

Economic constraints

FT commodities often come with an ethical premium making them more expensive than comparable conventional products; FT consumption is therefore resource-dependent and consumers buying FT products are prone to economic constraints. Narrow versions of rational choice theories (Opp 1999) and standard economic approaches focus on *budget restrictions* as crucial determinant of (ethical consumption) behavior. Based on the assumption that individuals make choices between behavioral alternatives or products/services, individuals choose, within their budget restrictions, the alternative that gives them the highest expected utility per cost unit (Opp 1999; Hanemann 1999). Preferences are understood to be stable subjective dispositions. Given the same ethical preferences for a certain set of goods, persons in higher income groups are able to spend more money on FT products than persons in lower income groups. Thus, persons with higher incomes are expected to consume more of these goods and exhibit a higher willingness to pay (WTP) for them (Hanemann 1999; Liebe & Preisdörfer 2007). Based on these considerations, Proposition 1 yields: *Income positively influences Fair Trade consumption*. Empirical evidence on the effect of income on FT consumption is mixed; while some studies find no effect (Dickson 2001;

DePelsmacker et al. 2006; Langen 2011; Sunderer & Rössel 2012), others find a positive effect (Auger et al. 2003; Hertel et al. 2009; Loureiro & Lotade 2005).

Social status and class

FT consumption not only involves economic capital, it can also be conceptualized as requiring cultural capital in the sense that consuming food is linked to the (re-) production of class structures and social inequality. Following this notion of Bourdieu's (1984) class theory, consumption practices serve as a means to indicate, maintain, and reinforce class structures and social distinction, thereby preserving dominant power structures in society. Likewise, Veblen (1899) put forward the idea of conspicuous consumption: Members of higher social classes consume expensive goods to prove and retain their social standing. The purchase of FT products can thus be conceptualized as a means of distinction from other members in society. Buying FT coffee – a more expensive but functionally equivalent product to conventional coffee – consumers can signal a high social status to and distance themselves from other members of society. FT consumption – and ethical consumption in general – is discussed among scholars of sociology of consumption as a means of distinction for upper and middle class consumers who possess the necessary economic means, and especially the cultural capital including the adequate educational background as institutionalized cultural capital to portray themselves as more ethical than consumers of lower social classes and of a lower social status (Adams & Raisborough 2008; Johnston 2008; Johnston et al. 2011; Lewis & Potter 2011: 13).

These considerations lead to Proposition 2: *Social status positively influences Fair Trade consumption*. Empirical studies on the effect of social status on FT consumption are scarce. Analyses of newspaper advertising for a FT company have found evidence of appealing to consumers' need for social distinction (Wright 2004).

Attitudes

Another determinant that often complements explanations of economic constraints in FT consumption is consumer attitude (e.g., DePelsmacker & Janssens 2007; Ozcaglar-Toulouse et al. 2006; Sunderer & Rössel 2012). Following the classic attitude-behavior paradigm, it is assumed that individ-

ual behavior, or behavioral intention, can be predicted by general or object-specific attitudes; these are conceptualized as “[...] a *valuation, which assigns to the entity an affective value that can range from extremely positive to extremely negative.*” (Kahneman et al. 1999: 205; italics and emphasis in the original). Consequently, the more positive a person's *specific* assessment of the action or object, the more likely it is that she will actually perform the behavior in question (Ajzen & Fishbein 1980). Most prominently, this approach has been elaborated in Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior.⁴

With regard to FT consumption positive attitudes toward FT or the beliefs underlying the FT concept (e.g., social justice in international trade, human rights, etc.) should have a positive effect on the purchase of such products. Following Green & Tunstall (1999: 216), this study conceptualizes WTP as a behavioral intention to buy these ethical products and not as an attitude, because WTP implies some form of the individuals' expectations about their future behavior, rather than the individuals' evaluation or desire for a single object or action.⁵

FT initiatives also highlight their contribution to the prevention and reduction of production processes harmful to nature and to the sustainable use of natural resources in developing countries. Hence, it can be argued that consumers' *general* positive assessment of the environment and the need for its protection can motivate FT consumption. In other words, general environmental concern might also have a positive effect on FT consumption. Proposition 3 therefore yields: *Positive attitudes toward Fair Trade positively influence Fair Trade consumption*; and Proposition 4 yields: *Environmental concern positively influences Fair Trade consumption*. Several studies have found the proposed positive effects of FT attitudes (De Pelsmacker & Janssens 2007; Langen 2011; Ozcaglar-Toulouse et al. 2006; Sunderer & Rössel 2012) and environmental concern (Loureiro & Lotade 2005) on ethical consumption.

⁴ The framework has been applied to a wide variety of behavioral phenomena (see Armitage & Connor (2001) for a meta-analytic review) including FT consumption (e.g., Ozcaglar-Toulouse et al. 2006).

⁵ Essentially, this is a preference-based approach to WTP. See Kahneman et al. (1999) for a general discussion of WTP as attitude.

Personal ethical values in Fair Trade consumption

Scholars of FT consumption find personal values worth considering because they point to general guidelines for individual action and shed light on pertinent moral motives and beliefs underlying ethical consumption practices beyond consumers' economic constraints. In light of Inglehart's post-materialism hypothesis (e.g., Inglehart 1990, 2008) which points to a long-term shift from materialist values of economic and physical security to post-materialist values of "autonomy," "self-expression," and "concern for the environment" as prosperity in societies increases, values are seen as important determinants of newly evolving ethical consumer practices (Shaw et al. 2005; Doran 2009; Peattie 2010: 207f.; Dietz et al. 2005).

Personal values are commonly defined as "[...] (a) [...] concepts or beliefs, [which] (b) pertain to desirable end states or behaviors, (c) transcend specific situations, (d) guide selection or evaluation of behavior and events, and (e) are ordered by relative importance" (Schwartz & Bilsky 1990: 878). From theoretical approaches on the value-behavior link (e.g., Schwartz 1994), it follows that values motivate behavior because they point to the desirable goals persons' hold for their lives. Values influence how individuals evaluate different courses of action; they can have an effect on situation-specific attitudes and personal norms; and can influence the overall attractiveness of products (Verplanken & Holland 2002).

Personal values that pertain to the underlying goals of the FT concept (e.g., solidarity, equality, social justice) may have a positive effect on the purchase of FT products because they influence the importance of the moral dimension and the overall attractiveness of FT products for consumers. Thus, consumers for whom such values are important personal values deem FT products more attractive than conventional products; buying FT products is a means to acting in accordance with one's personal values and avoiding cognitive dissonance in case of non-compliance. Likewise, personal religious standards such as the Christian virtues of charity and benevolence can exert a positive influence on FT consumption since they point to the importance of social justice and equality underlying the FT concept (Doran & Natale 2011).

In light of these theoretical arguments, Proposition 5 yields: *Personal values pertaining to the goals of the Fair Trade concept positively influence Fair Trade consumption.* Studies investigating the per-

sonal value characteristics of FT consumers provide evidence that these consumers score high on Schwartz's universalism values (e.g., social justice, equality, protecting the environment; Doran 2009; Shaw et al. 2005) or other-oriented values such as "desire for equality between humans" (deFerran & Grunert 2007). However, the positive effect of religiousness on FT consumption was found to be rather weak (Doran & Natale 2011).

4 Study background and methods

The study uses data from a general population survey on "Environmental Awareness in Germany" to empirically test the propositions. Since 1996, this cross-sectional survey has been conducted every two years with a focus on pro-environmental attitudes and behavior, environmental and health concerns as well as the evaluation of environmental policy measures in Germany. Starting in 2000, several questions on FT consumption have been included in the questionnaire. About 2,000 face-to-face interviews were carried out in the years 2000 (N = 2,018), 2004 (N = 2,018), 2006 (N = 2,034), 2008 (N = 2,021), and 2010 (N = 2,008); in 2002 the sample size was somewhat larger, comprising 2,361 respondents in total.⁶ Weighted data are used for the descriptive results in Table 1; non-weighted data are used for the multivariate analyses in Table 2.⁷ Table 1 gives an overview of the dependent and independent variables to be used in the analyses; the original German wording of the items is presented in Table A1 in the appendix. The proportion of missing data for household income ranges from 9.5 % in 2010 to 43 % in 2006. To ensure that estimations are unbiased, imputation procedures are applied for each data set.⁸ Specifically, conditional mean imputation is based on income regressions

⁶ The sampling population for all years comprises German resident population age 18 and above. Identification of the six data sets is as follows: 2000 – ZA4389 (doi: 10.4232/1.4389); 2002 – ZA3902 (doi: 10.4232/1.3902); 2004 – ZA4389 (doi: 10.4232/1.4389); 2006 – ZA4497 (doi: 10.4232/1.4497); 2008 – ZA4660 (doi: 10.4232/1.4660); 2010 – ZA5072 (doi:10.4232/1.10771).

⁷ For each sample, the weighting factor considers the overall distribution of gender and age within the population.

⁸ The proportion of missing data in 2006 is quite large, raising the question whether imputation procedures are at all appropriate in this case. However, results based on imputation procedures, missing data dummies or on the original data lead to similar conclusions. To ensure equal treatment of all six data sets imputation procedures are also applied to the 2006 data set.

with gender, age, and education in years of schooling as predictor variables.⁹

Some of the general problems of cross-sectional secondary data analysis are changes in the answer scales or answer categories; the re-formulation and re-location of items to a different section of the questionnaire; or the complete absence of items (Kiecolt & Nathan 1985). The notes for Table 1 highlight changes in the measurement instruments, and as operationalizations are introduced, the most important differences in the data sets are reported. These limitations notwithstanding, the strategy of analysis in this study has the advantage that replications with different items are a rigorous test of the stability of expected effects.

Dependent variable

The primary dependent variable is a single-item measure of self-reported willingness to pay more money for FT products from developing countries. The item is included in all six surveys and was measured on a 4-point answer scale (1 = not willing; 4 = very willing). In 2000, 2008 and 2010 the wording of the item and the answer categories were slightly different (see note a in Table 1). The drawback of measuring the dependent variable in such a way is that it does not discriminate between different FT products or price ranges and asks respondents about their FT consumption only hypothetically. A hypothetical bias might thus lead to problems of social desirable answers and an overestimation of FT consumption. Trying to counterbalance these shortcomings, an additional dependent variable is used for the in-depth analyses of the 2008 data set. Self-reported preference for purchasing FT products was selected as a second dependent variable because it measures FT consumption behavior a bit more closely to real world ethical consumption behavior. The item "I prefer Fair Trade products" was also measured on a 4-point answer scale (1 = do not agree at all; 4 = totally agree).

⁹ Such imputation procedures have the disadvantage of possibly underestimating corresponding standard errors (Allison 2001). Therefore, the estimates from conventional conditional mean imputation were compared with multiple imputation models as "[c]onventional analytic methods simply do not adjust for the fact that the imputation process involves uncertainty about the missing values." (Allison 2001: 12). To take the specific patterns of missingness within each data set into account multiple imputation procedures were applied. As these complex procedures yield very similar results to the conditional mean imputation, the study uses this less complex procedure.

Independent variables

For five of the six surveys (2000, 2004, 2006, 2008, and 2010), equalized disposable net household income is used to analyze the effect of *income*. It is calculated by dividing the household net income by the square root of the number of household members.¹⁰ In 2002, the questionnaire did not contain any measures of household net income. Instead, the multivariate analysis uses personal net income and controls for the number of persons living in the household. Typically, all income variables are skewed to the right; to avoid inaccurate estimations in the multivariate models, the income variables were logarithmized.

The study uses two measures of *social status*. In 2000, 2002, and 2004, respondents were asked to indicate their occupational situation. Based on the categories of the European social-economic classification (ESeC; Müller et al. 2006) the 13 answer categories in the questionnaires are grouped into four *class positions* (upper, middle, lower, self-employed).¹¹ The 2006, 2008, and 2010 surveys did not include these measures. Instead an item on *subjective social status* asking respondents to place themselves on a scale from 1 "at the bottom" to 10 "at the top" within German society is available. The difference between these two indicators is that the first one covers social stratification based on a multidimensional class scheme (employment relations, type of payment, monitoring of tasks; cf. Müller et al. 2006) while the second one is based on a one-dimensional concept of self-classification. In addition, respondents' *educational background* as institutionalized cultural capital is included as years of schooling.¹²

¹⁰ In all surveys, respondents' income was measured as a categorical variable with income intervals. The mean of each interval is used to calculate equalized disposable household income.

¹¹ Based on Müller et al. (2006) class positions include the following answer categories (see Table A1 in the appendix for exact German wording): upper [3], [7], [12], [13]; middle [2] and [11]; lower [1], [4], [5], [6], [10]; self-employed [8] and [9]. Based on FN 2 in Müller et al. (2006) entrepreneurs are included in the upper class position rather than self-employed. The results suggest only marginal differences if entrepreneurs are grouped as self-employed.

¹² In all surveys, education was measured as a categorical variable using school leaving certificates from different types of German schools. Based on the average years of schooling needed in Germany to get these certificates, the categories are transformed into years of schooling as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1 Summary of Dependent and Independent Variables

Wording		2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010
		Mean (S.D.) Min-Max N	Mean (S.D.) Min-Max N	Mean (S.D.) Min-Max N	Mean (S.D.) Min-Max N	Mean (S.D.) Min-Max N	Mean (S.D.) Min-Max N
<i>Dependent Variables</i>							
WTP for FT products ^a	To what extent are you personally willing to spend more money on products from developing countries (e.g., coffee, tea, or the like), if they are fairly traded, i. e. bought at a fair price from the local small-scale producers? (not willing; rather not willing; rather willing; very willing)	2.89 (0.88) 1–4 2,014	2.77 (0.86) 1–4 2,353	2.81 (0.87) 1–4 2,012	2.79 (0.86) 1–4 2,021	2.48 (0.84) 1–4 2,013	2.36 (0.87) 1–4 1,997
Preferring FT products	I prefer Fair Trade products. (do not agree at all; do rather not agree; do rather agree; do totally agree)	–	–	–	–	2.70 (0.89) 1–4 2,011	2.53 (0.91) 1–4 1,986
<i>Independent Variables</i>							
Household income EUR ^{b, c}		1231.72 (464.89) 112–3,000 1,588	1305.20 (725.88) 250–3,000 1,860	1453.55 (657.73) 125–3,000 1,463	1534.20 (802.37) 71–7,500 1,154	1429.31 (644.80) 71–5,303 1,829	1497.99 (633.15) 247–5,303 1,743
Class Position ^d	Please indicate your occupational status according to the list. (13 answer categories)				–	–	–
Upper	Higher grade professional, administrative, and managerial occupations (higher salariat); lower grade professional, administrative/managerial occupations/higher grade technician, and supervisory occupations (lower salariat)	0.242 1,730	0.257 2,027	0.253 1,720			
Middle	Intermediate occupations/qualified service and administrative personnel	0.250 1,730	0.257 2,027	0.249 1,720			
Lower	Lower supervisory and lower technician occupations/foremen/master craftsmen; lower clerical, services and sales occupations; lower technical occupations; routine occupations	0.447 1,730	0.435 2,027	0.437 1,720			
Self-employed	Self-employed and small employers (with agriculture)	0.061 1,730	0.051 2,027	0.061 1,720			
Subjective Social Status	In our society, there are groups, which are at the top, and groups which are at the bottom. Here we have a scale which runs from top to bottom. When you think about yourself, where would you place yourself on this scale? (at the bottom; at the top)	–	–	–	6.12 (1.57) 1–10 2,026	5.75 (1.55) 1–10 2,021	4.80 (1.46) 1–10 2,006

Table 1 cont.

	Wording	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010
<i>Independent Variables</i>							
Education (years of schooling)	7 = without degree, 9 = graduated after 9 years, 10 = graduated after 10 years/still at school, 12 = graduated after 12 years and qualifying for university of applied sciences admission, 13 = graduated after 13 years and qualifying for university admission, 16 = graduated from university of applied sciences after 16 years, 18 = graduated from university after 18 years	11.23 (2.98) 7–18 2,001	11.11 (2.93) 7–18 2,349	11.20 (2.97) 7–18 1,995	11.46 (3.07) 7–18 2,007	10.38 (2.37) 7–18 2,010	10.48 (2.39) 7–18 2,005
FT attitude ^e	There should be fair trade between the rich countries in the world and the developing countries. (do not agree at all; do rather not agree; do neither disagree nor agree; do rather agree; do totally agree)	4.13 (0.85) 1–5 2,011	4.10 (0.85) 1–5 2,351	4.23 (0.81) 1–5 2,004	4.22 (0.79) 1–5 2,030	3.36 (0.63) 1–4 2,019	–
Environmental concern ^f	Here is a list of statements. Please indicate to what extent you agree with each of them. (do not agree at all; do rather not agree; do neither disagree nor agree; do rather agree; do totally agree) additive index ... * In my opinion, environmental problems are greatly exaggerated by proponents of the environmental movement. ... * Science and technology will solve many problems without us having to change our way of living. ... If we continue our current way of living, we will soon face an environmental catastrophe. ... I am worried when I think about the environmental conditions my children and grandchildren will have to live in. ... There are limits to growth, which our industrialized world has already reached or will soon reach.	3.60 (0.66) 1–5 1,995	3.43 (0.67) 1–5 2,328	3.48 (0.68) 1–5 1,992	3.55 (0.65) 1–5 2,022	2.89 (0.52) 1–4 2,010	2.89 (0.53) 1–4 1,993
Solidarity ^g	How important are the following personal values for you? ... Solidarity (very unimportant; rather unimportant; rather important; very important)	3.33 (0.61) 1–4 2,006	3.31 (0.63) 1–4 2,349	3.30 (0.65) 1–4 2,006	5.07 (1.30) 1–7 2,024	–	–

Table 1 cont.

		2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010
<i>Independent Variables</i>							
Religious-ness	If somebody who is close to you were to say about you that you are a religious person, would s/he be right or wrong? (<i>no, s/he would be wrong; yes, s/he would be right</i>)	0.35 2,002	0.43 2,242	0.43 2,000	0.44 1,812	0.45 2,005	0.43 2,003
Gender	male; female	0.51 2,008	0.53 2,357	0.52 2,018	0.52 2,034	0.52 2,021	0.52 2,008
Age (years)		47.76 (17.38) 18–96 2,018	50.21 (17.47) 18–95 2,361	48.93 (17.36) 18–90 2,018	48.90 (17.24) 18–91 2,034	48.96 (17.50) 18–96 2,021	49.82 (17.82) 18–94 2,008
Knowledge FT label	How about the following labels and seals? Have you ever heard of or have you ever seen the Fair Trade label? (<i>no; yes</i>)	–	–	0.32 1,982	–	0.30 2,021	0.56 2,008

Notes:

Answer scales are printed in italics and parentheses. FT = Fair Trade; WTP = Willingness to Pay *Disagreement indicates higher environmental concern/negatively keyed item.

^a In 2000, the wording and the answer categories of the dependent variable were slightly different: "Are you willing to spend more money on products from developing countries (e.g., coffee, tea, or the like) if they are fairly traded, i. e. bought at a fair price from the local small-scale farmers?" (*no; rather no; rather yes; yes*). In 2008 and 2010, the answer category was slightly different: *not at all; not much; rather much; very much*.

^b In all surveys, net household income was measured as a categorical variable using income intervals. From these, mean values were used to calculate equalized disposable household income (dividing the household net income by the square root of the number of household members).

^c For the years 2000 and 2002, income was measured in Deutsche Mark; for the analyses the Deutsche Mark was converted into euros (1 EUR = 2 DM). In 2002, the questionnaire only included measures of personal net income; measures of household net income were not included.

^d Class positions are based on the European socio-economic classification by Müller et al. (2006). See Table A1 in the appendix for German wording of answer categories and FN 11 for categorization.

^e For 2008, the item was measured on a 4-point answer scale (*do not agree at all; do rather not agree; do rather agree; do totally agree*).

^f Negatively keyed items are re-coded. All items are combined into an additive index. Index values are allocated if respondents have no missing values on all items. In the years 2000, 2002, 2004, and 2006, the items are based on a scale proposed by Diekmann & Preisendörfer (2003). In 2008, a 4-point answer scale was used (*does not apply at all; does rather not apply; rather applies; fully applies*). In addition, only three of the five items were included in the questionnaire; the first and fifth item was not asked. In the additive index, these two items were substituted with the following: "We should not use more resources than can grow again.", "If more regulations on environmental protection are introduced, we will soon be prohibited from doing anything at all." (negatively keyed item). In 2010, only one item from Diekmann and Preisendörfer's original scale was included in the questionnaire ("I am worried under which environmental conditions our children and grandchildren will have to live."). In addition, respondents were asked the following three items on the 4-point answer scale: "Without additional policy measures, the environmental situation will greatly deteriorate." "If more regulations on environmental protection are introduced, we will soon be prohibited from doing anything at all." (negatively keyed item) "Changing our behavior to protect the environment often has other advantages such as saving money or bringing about positive health effects."

^g In 2006, the wording and the answer scale of the items on personal values were slightly different: "Everybody has certain ideas which guide his life and actions. When you think about what you aspire in life: How important are the following things for you personally? ... Helping the socially deprived and marginalized." (1 = *unimportant*; 7 = *very important*).

Respondents' *FT attitude* is measured with the item "There should be fair trade between the world's rich countries and the developing countries." In the first four surveys, the item was measured on a 5-point answer scale (1 = not agree at all; 5 = totally agree); a 4-point answer scale was used in the 2008 survey (1 = not agree at all; 4 = totally agree). In 2010, the item was not included. Admittedly, this is a rough measurement of respondents' specific as-

essment and desirability of FT consumption, as it only points to the issue of social justice in FT consumption; the discussion section will therefore point to more sophisticated measures.

Environmental concern is based on items from a scale proposed by Diekmann & Preisendörfer (2003: 454f.). Their initial scale focuses on the cognitive (insight into endangerment), conative (willingness to act), and affective aspects (feelings of

fear or anger) of environmental concern as a general attitude. For the years 2000, 2002, 2004, and 2006, the five items are combined into an additive index ranging from 1 “do not agree at all” to 5 “totally agree.”^{13, 14} In 2008, only three of the five items measured on a 4-point answer scale (1 = does not apply at all; 4 = fully applies) were included in the survey. Items on exaggeration of environmental problems and on limits to growth were not asked. Hence, these items are substituted with two items on the sustainable use of resources and on environmental regulations (see note f in Table 1 for the exact wording). Again, the five items were combined into an additive index.¹⁵ In 2010, only one of the items from Diekmann and Preisendörfer’s scale on respondents’ concern for future generations was included in the questionnaire. Additionally, respondents were asked three new items as indicated in note f of Table 1. Again, these items are combined into an additive index ranging from 1 “does not apply at all” to 4 “fully applies.”¹⁶

Solidarity as a personal value was measured on a 4-point answer scale ranging from 1 “very unimportant” to 4 “very important” in the 2000, 2002, and 2004 surveys. In 2006, personal values were measured on a 7-point answer scale (1 = unimportant; 7 = very important) and the item on solidarity read “Helping the socially deprived and marginalized.” As these variables are strongly skewed, they will enter the model as a dichotomous variable with value 1 for respondents who find solidarity to be a very important personal value (answer category 4 in 2000, 2002, and 2004; answer categories 6 and 7 in 2006), and 0 for all other respondents. *Religiosity* enters the analyses as the dichotomous

item “If somebody who is close to you were to say about you that you are a religious person, would s/he be right or wrong?”

All models control for respondents’ *gender* (0 = male and 1 = female) and *age*. The 2004, 2008, and 2010 surveys also asked respondents about their *knowledge of the Fair Trade label* (0 = no; 1 = yes). The in-depth analysis of the 2008 includes this variable as additional control; a plausible positive effect of knowledge on the dependent variables is expected (cf. De Pelsmacker & Janssens 2007).

5 Results

5.1 Descriptive results

Overall, the study finds relatively high levels of self-reported willingness to pay more for FT products. Between 2000 and 2006, nearly 70 % of respondents were “rather willing” or “very willing” to pay more for FT products. However, in 2008 and 2010 this applied only to about half of the respondents (see Table A2 in the appendix for the exact distribution of the dependent variable). Mean WTP changed only marginally between 2000 and 2006 (Table 1). Starting with a mean of 2.89 in 2000, WTP decreased to 2.77 in 2002 and increased again in 2004 (mean = 2.81) and 2006 (mean = 2.79). The notably lower mean values of WTP in 2008 (mean = 2.48) and 2010 (mean = 2.36) could indicate an overall decline in self-reported WTP for FT products; yet, for these two years, the wording of the answer categories was different (see note a in Table 1) and, therefore, possible method effects cannot be eliminated.

The second dependent variable is self-reported preference for FT products when shopping; it has only been included in the survey since 2008. In 2008, 62 % of respondents “rather agreed” or “totally agreed” with the item “I prefer Fair Trade products.” In 2010, this applied to 55 % of respondents (see Table A2 in the appendix for the exact distribution of the dependent variable). Corresponding mean values were at 2.70 in 2008 and at 2.53 in 2010 (Table 1).

In contrast to these high levels of self-reported FT consumption, the market shares of FT products are quite small; even when taking only those respondents into account who report to be “very willing” to pay more for FT products or “totally agree” with preferring FT products. In 2000, FT coffee – one of the oldest and most widely available FT

¹³ For all additive indices, index values are allocated if respondents have no missing values on all items.

¹⁴ Factor analyses with rotated factor loadings of orthogonal varimax of principal component analysis for the years 2000, 2002, and 2004 give a one-dimensional solution and the items form a reliable scale with Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.69$ (2000 and 2002) and $\alpha = 0.68$ (2004). For 2006, the factor analysis gives a one-dimensional solution if the item on limits to growth is excluded. To keep the measurement instruments as similar as possible, this item is included in the scale. The items form a reliable scale with Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.66$ (2006).

¹⁵ Factor analysis as described in FN 14 gives a one-dimensional solution if the item on science and technology solving environmental problems is excluded. To keep the measurement instruments as similar as possible this item is included in the index. The items form a reliable scale with Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.63$ (2008).

¹⁶ Factor analysis as described in FN 14 gives a one-dimensional solution; Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.58$ (2010).

product – accounted for roughly 1 % of all coffee sold in Germany (Krier 2008); according to the latest figures from 2011 market shares are close to 2 % (TransFair 2012b). Market shares of FT bananas were at 2.1 % in 2011 (TransFair 2012b); FT roses accounted for a market share of 6.8 % (TransFair 2012b). Comparing survey data with market data of FT consumption thus points to a gap between what respondents report in surveys and what consumers buy on the market. This gap is part of a lively debate among scholars of ethical consumption about the theoretical underpinnings and methodological approaches in the field. Some scholars argue for a refinement of theories (e.g., Newholm & Shaw 2007) while others argue for applying methods other than surveys to take the problems of socially desirable answers and hypothetical bias into account (e.g., Devinney et al. 2010).

Awareness of FT products is another indicator of FT consumption. About one third of respondents had heard about or seen the FT label in 2004 and 2008. By 2010, 56 % of respondents reported to be aware of it (Table 1). This proportion is in line with data from a global online-survey commissioned by Fairtrade International (2011), which suggests that 69 % of German respondents report to have seen the FT label “often” or “occasionally.” At first glance, the low levels of awareness of FT labels reported in the surveys on Environmental Awareness in Germany in 2004 and 2008 seem to be at odds with respondents’ high levels of self-reported willingness to spend more for FT products. One possible explanation might be that consumers do not always distinguish between labels of Fair Trade and, for example, organic produce. Langen (2011) shows that respondents perceive only minor differences between FT and organic coffee and favor these two types of ethical products interchangeably. In Germany, 76 % of FT coffee is also certified as organic (TransFair 2012a). While beyond the scope of this study, it would be interesting to investigate the links of FT and organic consumption since organic consumption is another prominent example of positive ethical consumption behavior.¹⁷

¹⁷ The six data sets include measures of the self-reported frequency of organic consumption (“I buy food which is labeled with the organic label or other labels indicating organic agriculture.”) However, items for health-related aspects of organic consumption are not available. Especially, when it comes to the differences in FT and organic consumption, the motivations for organic consumption need to be controlled for.

5.2 Multivariate results

Table 2 reports models of ordinary least squares (OLS) regressions and robust standard errors to account for heteroskedasticity in the data.¹⁸ The basic models (models 1–6) are estimated with those independent variables that are available in almost all data sets (i. e., household income, class position or subjective social status, FT attitude, environmental concern, solidarity as a personal value, religiousness, education, gender, age). For the in-depth analysis of the 2008 data set (models 7 and 8) self-reported *preference for FT products* is available as an alternative dependent variable.

Analysis of the years 2000–2010

Following *Proposition 1* on the effect of budget restrictions in FT consumption, a positive effect of income on self-reported WTP for FT products is expected. This effect is found in all models for the years 2000 to 2010; and except for the 2008 survey, the effects are statistically significant. For the 2008 survey, models not presented in Table 2 show that the positive effect of income becomes significant once subjective social status is not included in the model; the effects of all other determinants are stable. However, this finding cannot be replicated in any of the other models minimizing the possibility of a methods effect due to a different measurement of subjective social status instead of social class in the 2006, 2008, and 2010 surveys. So for 2008, income and subjective social status are correlated

¹⁸ Both dependent variables have four answer categories and ordered logit models might also be used for model estimation. One of the model assumptions is the parallel regression assumption (Long & Freese 2006: 197–200). The Wald test by Brant (1990) shows that this assumption of similar relationships between the answer categories is violated in the data sets; therefore, generalized ordered logit models were estimated (Long & Freese 2006: 220f.; Williams 2007). As these models do not lead to substantially different conclusions, OLS-models are reported. All models presented in Table 2 were also estimated using binary logistic regression. The dependent variable is 1 for respondents who are “rather willing” or “very willing” to pay more for FT products and who “rather agree” and “strongly agree” that they prefer purchasing FT products. Again, these models yield results similar to those of the OLS-models. An analysis of influential observations was performed for each data set. For the 2000, 2002, 2004, 2008, and 2010 data sets, potentially influential observations were identified. The results of models with and without these observations are very similar and thus models including these observations are reported.

pointing to an overlap of the two concepts. This finding is not implausible in that income along with education as an objective measure of social status can be linked to perceptions of subjective social status. Nevertheless, by and large the results suggest that when controlling for determinants other than economic restrictions, income is a relevant determinant of FT consumption. Budget constraints should therefore not be ignored when explaining FT consumption.

Proposition 2 argued that social status promotes FT consumption through the concepts of *social distinction* and *conspicuous consumption*. Using class position (models 1–3) and subjective social status (models 4–6) the expected positive and statistically significant effect is found in all models. With regard to class position, respondents of upper and middle class positions as well as the self-employed are significantly more willing to pay more for FT products than respondents of lower class positions. Likewise, the expected positive effect of subjective social status can be found in models 4–6. The higher respondents place themselves on the social status scale, the higher their WTP for FT products. In addition, *education* exerts a positive and statistically significant effect in five of the six models. In other words, as respondents' years of schooling increase, so does their self-reported WTP for FT products. Overall, these findings support the argument of sociologists of consumption that ethical consumption is a phenomenon of higher class positions and higher social status.

The propositions about the positive effects of the behavior-specific FT attitude (*Proposition 3*) and general environmental concern (*Proposition 4*) are supported in large part. The expected positive and statistically significant effect of FT attitude is found in all five models (in 2010 the item was not included in the questionnaire). With regard to environmental concern, all six basic models show the expected effects. The findings thus indicate that object specific FT attitudes and general attitudes of environmental concern are relevant motivators of self-reported FT consumption and complement determinants of economic constraints and social status.

Solidarity and religiousness were used as two operationalizations of *personal values* pertaining to the goals of the FT concept. The data strongly support *Proposition 5*; both personal values exert positive and statistically significant effects on the self-reported willingness to pay more for FT products in all years for which they were measured.

Studies in environmental sociology (e.g., Dietz et al. 1998; Zelezny et al. 2000), green consumerism (e.g., Diamantopoulos et al. 2003), and FT consumption (e.g., Sunderer & Rössel 2012) suggest that women rather than men consume FT products. This *gender* effect is found in models 5 and 6, with female respondents significantly more willing to pay more for FT products than men. With regard to *age*, no statistically significant effect can be found – except for the 2010 model. Here, the negative coefficient indicates a small decrease of self-reported WTP for FT products the older the respondents.

In-depth analysis of the 2008 survey

For the in-depth models of the 2008 survey, *knowledge* of the Fair Trade label was added as covariate to the basic model (model 7) and self-reported preference for FT products is used as an additional dependent variable in model 8 in Table 2. As in the basic model of the 2008 survey (model 5), income exerts a statistically significant effect neither on self-reported WTP for FT products (model 7), nor on the self-reported preference for purchasing FT products (model 8). Models not presented in Table 2 show once more that the effect of income becomes significant once subjective social status is not included; the effects of all other determinants are stable. In this regard, *Proposition 1* is only partly supported in the in-depth analyses.

In line with *Proposition 2*, a positive and statistically significant effect of subjective social status is found in both in-depth models. The higher respondents place themselves on the subjective social status scale, the more willing they are to pay more for FT products (model 7) and the more they agree that they prefer purchasing FT products (model 8). With regard to *education*, the previously identified positive and statistically significant effect also holds in the in-depth analyses. Overall, these findings corroborate the understanding of FT consumption as a form of distinction by consumers of higher social status. However, they have to be taken with a grain of salt because of the above mentioned overlap in income and subjective social status.

The in-depth analysis also supports *Propositions 3* and *4* on the positive effect of attitudes on FT consumption. In models 7 and 8, the specific FT attitude exerts a positive and statistically significant effect. General environmental concern also has a positive effect; however, it is statistically significant only in model 7.

For the 2008 data, *personal FT values* can only be operationalized as respondents' religiousness; the

Table 2 Multivariate Models

Survey Year	Basic Models on FT Determinants						In-depth Models	
	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2008	2008
Dependent Variable	(1) WTP	(2) WTP	(3) WTP	(4) WTP	(5) WTP	(6) WTP	(7) WTP	(8) Prefer
Household Income (log)	0.121* (0.05)	0.105** (0.03)	0.208*** (0.06)	0.177** (0.05)	0.088 (0.06)	0.162** (0.06)	0.079 (0.06)	0.066 (0.06)
Class Position (ref. lower)								
Upper	0.181** (0.06)	0.186*** (0.05)	0.146** (0.06)					
Middle	0.175** (0.05)	0.232*** (0.05)	0.195*** (0.05)					
Self-employed/ Small employers	0.178* (0.09)	0.154+ (0.09)	0.272** (0.09)					
Subjective Social Status				0.067*** (0.01)	0.065*** (0.01)	0.082*** (0.01)	0.064*** (0.01)	0.053*** (0.01)
Education (years of schooling)	0.030*** (0.01)	-0.002 (0.01)	0.023*** (0.01)	0.027*** (0.01)	0.029*** (0.01)	0.016* (0.01)	0.027*** (0.01)	0.028*** (0.01)
FT Attitude	0.260*** (0.03)	0.298*** (0.02)	0.253*** (0.03)	0.291*** (0.03)	0.272*** (0.03)		0.271*** (0.03)	0.253*** (0.03)
Environmental Concern	0.219*** (0.03)	0.240*** (0.03)	0.234*** (0.03)	0.203*** (0.03)	0.142*** (0.04)	0.401*** (0.04)	0.133*** (0.04)	0.061 (0.04)
Solidarity (ref. no)	0.167*** (0.04)	0.124** (0.04)	0.157*** (0.04)	0.109** (0.04)				
Religiousness (ref. no)	0.091* (0.04)	0.167*** (0.04)	0.165*** (0.04)	0.099** (0.04)	0.131** (0.04)	0.099** (0.04)	0.130** (0.04)	0.173*** (0.04)
Gender (ref. male)	-0.01 (0.04)	0.004 (0.04)	-0.048 (0.04)	-0.007 (0.04)	0.135*** (0.04)	0.173*** (0.04)	0.134*** (0.04)	0.137*** (0.04)
Age (in years)	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.004*** (0.001)	-0.0003 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)
Knowledge of FT label (ref. no)							0.087* (0.04)	-0.110** (0.04)
Intercept	-0.298 (0.41)	-0.296 (0.27)	-0.986* (0.43)	-1.194*** (0.37)	-0.244 (0.39)	-0.476 (0.38)	-0.162 (0.39)	0.445 (0.41)
Adj. R ²	0.22	0.24	0.22	0.21	0.12	0.13	0.12	0.09
N	1671	1873	1655	1750	1980	1974	1980	1978

Notes: OLS-regressions with unstandardized regression coefficients and robust standard errors in parentheses. FT = Fair Trade; WTP = willingness to pay more for FT products (1 = not willing; 4 = very willing); Prefer = preference for FT products when going shopping (1 = not agree at all; 4 = totally agree). The 2002 model also controls for the size of the household because only a measure for personal income is available. +p < 0.1 * p < 0.05 ** p < 0.01 *** p < 0.001

survey did not include solidarity as a personal value. Supporting *Proposition 5*, religiousness exerts a positive and statistically significant effect in models 7 and 8. In line with the basic model of the 2008 survey (model 5), *gender* exerts a positive and statistically significant effect in models 7 and 8, while *age* does not have any statistical effect in either model.

So far, models 7 and 8 mostly showed similar effects of the covariates. However, a different result is found with regard to respondents' *knowledge* of the FT label. As expected, the coefficient in model 7 is positive and statistically significant indicating that respondents who have heard or seen the FT label report to be more willing to pay more for FT products. In model 8, however, the statistically significant coefficient is negative. Respondents who

know the FT label have a lower stated-preference for purchasing FT products. Running counter to considerations of consumer knowledge and information (e.g., DePelsmacker & Janssens 2007), a tentative explanation – albeit in need of a thorough empirical investigation – could be as follows: The more closely self-reported FT consumption is measured to real-world FT purchasing behavior, the more important will respondents' trust in the label become rather than the mere knowledge of the FT label. In other words, the negative coefficient might indicate respondents' lack of trust in FT labels, which is not controlled for in the model. However, this proposition cannot be tested in this study as items on respondents' trust in FT labels were not included in the questionnaires.

This tentative explanation points to yet another determinant complementing concepts of economic capital and cultural capital in FT consumption – social capital. Understood as “[...] features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust [...]” (Putnam 1995: 67), social capital can solve problems of mutual cooperation because it facilitates and fosters cooperation among individual members of society or between individuals and organizations. Thus, in the case of FT consumption, social trust facilitates cooperation and market exchanges between consumers and FT institutions. Customers who believe in the FT label and are convinced that their purchase does improve the livelihood of producer cooperatives and workers are more likely to buy FT commodities.¹⁹

6 Discussion

The main aim of this study was to investigate self-reported FT consumption in Germany using cross-sectional data from the bi-yearly general population survey on “Environmental Awareness in Germany.” A narrow conception of social action focusing on budget constraints was complemented with determinants that point to the social function of ethical consumption. On the basis of six consecutive surveys conducted between 2000 and 2010, the effect of income, social status, attitudes, and personal values on self-reported willingness to pay more for FT and on self-reported preferences for FT products when going shopping was analyzed.

The results suggest that the resource dependence of FT consumption should not be ignored; income proved to be a relevant determinant in almost all models. However, the empirical models also led to the conclusion that social status, the FT specific attitude and general environmental concern as well as solidarity and religiousness as personal values are important determinants of FT consumption. The study thus highlights that standard economic determinants do not suffice in explanations of FT consumption.

Overall, the findings can be linked to more general discussions of consumption in sociology. Two links are especially noteworthy. First, the study points to FT consumption as a form of middle and upper class distinction and highlights the relevance of concepts of social class and status in ethical consumption. In a next step, FT consumption decisions could therefore be investigated in a setting in which reference groups from different class positions can actually observe ethical consumption behavior. Second, the study pointed to the role of social capital in ethical consumption and raised the tentative argument that social capital can complement concepts of economic capital and cultural capital in explanations of FT consumption since trust in FT certification can solve problems of mutual cooperation between consumers and FT institutions. In a next step, the rough sketch of this understanding needs to be specified and analyzed empirically to make a fruitful contribution to the explanations of FT consumption.

Using multiple data sets from a general population survey for the empirical analyses reduces problems of the generalizability of results related to convenience samples (of students) or purposive samples of ethical consumers, which are often found in research on FT consumption. Yet this study of secondary data analysis does have its own drawbacks.

First, some constructs that proved to be fruitful in previous explanations of FT consumption were not measured in the surveys. For example, the analyses did not include social and personal norms of FT consumption, FT consumer identity, or trust (cf. Andorfer & Liebe 2013; Sunderer & Rössel 2012). Moreover, the measurement of economic constraints could be elaborated more. Restrictions in consumers' resources not only pertain to their household income but also to their perceived financial situation. In addition, the perceived availability and quality of FT products in supermarkets and the effort consumers have to make to buy them are also relevant dimensions.

¹⁹ See Neilson (2010) and Koos (2012) for related arguments on the effect of generalized trust for positive ethical consumption behavior/‘buycotting’ in general.

Second, most of the covariates are single-item measures of complex constructs such as attitudes, values, or beliefs. Especially with regard to the complex and multidimensional concept of “Fair Trade attitude,” it would have been more appropriate to use several items. Sunderer & Rössel (2012: 246) put forward a more sophisticated measure which they call “FT consciousness.” Using eight items, they cover the cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions of respondents’ specific assessment of FT consumption.

Third, the measurement of the two dependent variables is open to criticism. The study did not analyze actual FT consumption but single-item measures of self-reported FT consumption. Contrary to real-world purchase behavior, respondents did not have to make trade-offs between product attributes such as price and fair trade. Survey-based discrete choice experiments (DCEs) for which respondents are asked to choose among hypothetical product alternatives the one they prefer the most can be a useful alternative to simple item measures; mirroring real-world purchasing behavior more closely, DCEs can reduce problems of hypothetical bias and social desirability (e.g., Auspurg & Liebe 2011; Carlsson et al. 2010; Louviere et al. 2000). To tackle problems of social desirability and causality in FT consumption, field experiments can also be considered a suitable methodological approach (e.g., Arnot et al. 2006; Hainmueller et al. 2011).

Finally, the items used as dependent variables in this study did not differentiate between FT products and their prices. Varying the costs of FT consumption (e.g., low ethical premium vs. high ethical premium) would not only allow for a more realistic measurement of FT consumption but would also permit investigating whether FT attitudes influence FT consumption differently in situations of low and high financial (and behavioral) costs (i. e., the low-cost hypothesis; Diekmann & Preisendörfer 2003; Best & Kroneberg 2012).

7 Conclusion

This study tentatively explored a combination of determinants derived from different theoretical origins and tried to highlight that wider models of social action incorporating determinants other than economic constraints are a fruitful start in explaining ethical consumption. An integrated theoretical framework of FT consumption would have to spell out how determinants from different theoretical origins interact on the level of individual ethical

consumption choices; how crucial determinants are identified; and how problems of potentially diverging or opposing implications can be solved. At the same time such a theoretical framework would also have to account for the structural factors influencing FT consumption on the macro level, as research on ethical consumption has been criticized for its individualistic bias (Clarke et al. 2007; Koos 2011, 2012; Thøgersen 2010). Systematic academic work on the influence of political regulations, organizational forms of FT as social movements, supply-side characteristics and country differences in the market of FT products is lacking.²⁰

A starting point for a theoretical synthesis could be a macro-micro-macro model (e.g., Coleman 1990; Esser 1996; Opp 2009). Drawing tentatively on considerations by Diekmann & Preisendörfer (2001: 162ff.) with respect to an integrated theoretical framework of the ecological social movement, an explanation of FT consumption may start at the macro-level with the political and social context. Relevant aspects could, for example, be a moralization of markets due to growing affluence and higher levels of education (Stehr 2007) accompanied by a shift from materialist values of basic needs to post-materialist values in affluent societies (Inglehart 1990); state withdrawal from traditional areas of civic responsibilities with a rise of NGOs and other forms of collective action that open up new ways of engaging in issues of personal concern (Micheletti 2010); media coverage on the impact and risks of affluent lifestyles on a global level (Strong 1996); and the availability, assortment, and price of FT products, related retailing structures and state regulations (Koos 2011, 2012).

Beginning at the macro level with the specific social situation of FT consumption, bridge hypotheses about how these context factors influence and form consumers’ actions at the micro level need to be made. Framing approaches from research on social movements could, for example, inform about how individuals perceive these factors (e.g., Diekmann & Preisendörfer 2001: 160f.). Similarly, approaches of resource mobilization could shed light on how economic, political, and cultural opportunities shape consumers (e.g., Koos 2012).

From this macro-to-micro transition, the focus shifts to individuals’ consumption behavior (e.g., buying FT coffee instead of conventional coffee). At this point the above mentioned manifold theo-

²⁰ While the market share of FT coffee is around 2 % in Germany and 4 % in Switzerland, FT coffee accounts for roughly 20 % in the UK (Krier 2008; TransFair 2012b).

retical perspectives of individual level determinants of FT consumption come into play. It is crucial for future research to refine the links between the different concepts and solve problems of potentially diverging or opposing implications. Comparing different theories in a competitive manner is a first step in this direction (e.g., Andorfer & Liebe 2013; Sunderer & Rössel 2012). From the perspective of a wider rational choice theory, for example, consumers' (perceived) restrictions, opportunities, and incentives (e.g., household income, subjective financial situation, and availability of FT products) and moral motives come into play (e.g., attitudes such as social injustice and exploitation in interna-

tional trade; beliefs like the doubt that small-scale farmers in developing countries benefit from the FT premium; values such as solidarity and equality; and social and personal norms).

Moving back to the macro level, assumptions need to be made about how individual actions and interactions of FT consumption aggregate to the collective phenomenon of FT consumption. Here, approaches from research on political consumerism (e.g., Micheletti 2010) about individualized collective action or social dilemma perspectives on involving individuals in ethical consumption could provide initial orientation.

Appendix

Table A1 Original German Wording of the Items

		<i>Dependent Variables</i>
WTP for FT products ^a	Inwieweit sind Sie persönlich bereit, für Produkte aus Entwicklungsländern (z. B. Kaffee, Tee, u. ä.) mehr Geld auszugeben, wenn diese aus fairem Handel stammen, d. h. zu angemessenen Preisen von dortigen Kleinproduzenten gekauft werden? (<i>nicht bereit; eher nicht bereit; eher bereit; sehr bereit</i>)	
Preferring FT products	Im Folgenden haben wir einige Aussagen zum Kauf von Produkten zusammengestellt. [...] Ich bevorzuge Produkte aus fairem Handel. (<i>stimme überhaupt nicht zu; stimme eher nicht zu; stimme eher zu; stimme voll und ganz zu</i>)	
		<i>Independent Variables</i>
Class Positions	Bitte ordnen Sie Ihre berufliche Stellung nach dieser Liste ein.	
	<i>Angestellte außerhalb öffentlicher Verwaltung:</i>	[1] ausführende Angestellte (z. B. Verkäufer, FA für Schreibtechnik); [2] qualifizierte Angestellte (z. B. Hauptsachbearbeiter, Sachbearbeiter, Buchhalter, Fachgebietsverantwortliche); [3] leitende Angestellte mittlerer und höherer Leistungsebenen
	<i>Arbeiter außerhalb öffentlicher Verwaltung:</i>	[4] ungelernte, angelernte und Teilfacharbeiter; [5] Facharbeiter mit abgeschlossener Lehre; [6] Meister/qualifizierte Facharbeiter
	<i>Selbständige/Freie Berufe/Landwirte:</i>	[7] Selbständige (z. B. Einzelhändler mit Geschäft; Handwerker; Unternehmer); [8] freiberufliche Tätigkeit; [9] selbständige Landwirte
	<i>Arbeiter und Angestellte in öffentlicher Verwaltung/Beamte:</i>	[10] Arbeiter in der öffentlichen Verwaltung; [11] ausführende Angestellte öffentlicher Verwaltungen/Beamte im einfachen Dienst; [12] qualifizierte Angestellte öffentlicher Verwaltungen/Beamte im mittleren Dienst; [13] öffentlich Angestellte mit Leitungsaufgaben mittlerer und höherer Ebene/Beamte im gehobenen und im höheren Dienst
Subjective Social Status	In unserer Gesellschaft gibt es Bevölkerungsgruppen, die eher oben stehen und solche, die eher unten stehen. Wir haben hier eine Skala, die von oben nach unten verläuft. wenn Sie an sich selbst denken: Wo würden Sie sich auf dieser Skala einordnen? (<i>unten; oben</i>)	
Education (years)	7 = Schule beendet ohne Abschluss, 9 = Volks-Hauptschulabschluss/POS-Abschluss nach 9. Klasse, 10 = Mittlere Reife/Realschulabschluss/POS-Abschluss nach 10. Klasse/bin noch SchülerIn, 12 = Fachhochschulreife (Abschluss einer Fachoberschule etc.), 13 = Abitur (Hochschulreife)/erweiterte Oberschule mit Abschluss 12. Klasse, 16 = Fachhochschulabschluss, 18 = Universitätsabschluss/Hochschulabschluss	
FT attitude ^b	Es sollte fairen Handel zwischen den reichen Ländern dieser Erde und den Entwicklungsländern geben. (<i>stimme überhaupt nicht zu; stimme eher nicht zu; teils/teils; stimme weitgehend zu; stimme voll und ganz zu</i>)	

Table A1 cont.

<i>Independent Variables</i>	
Env. Concern ^c	Hier haben wir eine Reihe von Aussagen. Bitte sagen Sie mir [...], in welchem Maße Sie zustimmen oder nicht zustimmen. (<i>stimme überhaupt nicht zu; stimme eher nicht zu; teils/teils; stimme weitgehend zu; stimme voll und ganz zu</i>) ... * Nach meiner Einschätzung wird das Umweltproblem in seiner Bedeutung von vielen Umweltschützern stark übertrieben. ... * Wissenschaft und Technik werden viele Umweltprobleme lösen, ohne dass wir unsere Lebensweise ändern müssen. ... Wenn wir so weitermachen wie bisher, steuern wir auf eine Umweltkatastrophe zu. ... Es beunruhigt mich, wenn ich daran denke, unter welchen Umweltverhältnissen unsere Kinder und Enkelkinder wahrscheinlich leben müssen. ... Es gibt Grenzen des Wachstums, die unsere industrialisierte Welt schon überschritten hat oder sehr bald erreichen wird.
Solidarity ^d	Wie wichtig sind Ihnen die folgenden persönlichen Werte? ... Solidarität (<i>völlig unwichtig; eher unwichtig; eher wichtig; sehr wichtig</i>)
Religiousness	Wenn jemand, der Ihnen nahesteht, von Ihnen sagen würde, Sie sind ein religiöser Mensch, hätte er eher recht oder hätte er eher nicht recht? (<i>nein, hätte eher nicht recht; ja, hätte eher recht</i>)
Knowledge FT label	Und wie ist es mit den folgenden Zeichen und Siegeln? Von welchen haben Sie schon mal gehört bzw. welche haben Sie schon mal gesehen? (<i>nein; ja</i>)

Notes: Answer scales printed in italics and parentheses. FT = Fair Trade; WTP = Willingness to Pay * Disagreement indicates higher environmental concern.

^a In 2000, the wording and the answer categories of the dependent variable were slightly different: „Sind Sie bereit, für Produkte aus Entwicklungsländern (z. B. Kaffee, Tee u. ä.) mehr Geld auszugeben, wenn diese aus fairem Handel stammen, d. h. zu angemessenen Preisen von dortigen Kleinproduzenten gekauft werden?“ (*nein; eher nein; eher ja; ja*). In 2008 and 2010, the answer category was slightly different: *gar nicht; eher weniger; eher stark; sehr stark*.

^b For 2008, the item was measured with a four-point answer scale: *trifft überhaupt nicht zu; trifft eher nicht zu; trifft eher zu; trifft ganz genau zu*.

^c In 2008, „Wir sollten nicht mehr Ressourcen verbrauchen als nachwachsen können.“ and „Wenn es noch mehr Vorschriften für den Natur- und Umweltschutz gibt, kann man bald überhaupt nichts mehr machen.“ were used because the first and the fifth item were not included in the survey. In 2010, the items „Es beunruhigt mich, wenn ich daran denke, unter welchen Umweltverhältnissen unsere Kinder und Enkelkinder wahrscheinlich leben müssen.“, „Ohne zusätzliche politischen Maßnahmen wird sich die Umweltsituation dramatisch verschlechtern.“, „Wenn es noch mehr Vorschriften für den Umweltschutz gibt, kann man bald überhaupt nichts mehr machen.“, „Wenn wir für den Schutz der Umwelt unser Verhalten ändern, hat das meist auch andere Vorteile, wie beispielweise Geld sparen oder gute Auswirkungen auf die Gesundheit.“ were used.

^d In 2006, the wording and the answer scale of the items on personal values were different: „Jeder Mensch hat ja bestimmte Vorstellungen, die sein Leben und Verhalten bestimmen. Wenn Sie einmal daran denken, was Sie in Ihrem Leben eigentlich anstreben: Wie wichtig sind dann die folgenden Dinge für Sie persönlich? ... Sozial Benachteiligten und gesellschaftlichen Randgruppen helfen.“ (*unwichtig; außerordentlich wichtig*).

Table A2 Distribution of the dependent variables per answer category in %

Answer category	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010
Dependent Variable 1: WTP for FT products						
not willing	7.0	9.4	9.3	8.9	13.3	18.2
rather not willing	23.3	22.8	20.7	22.7	35.1	35.6
rather willing	43.2	49.4	49.5	48.6	41.9	38.4
very willing	26.5	18.4	20.5	19.8	9.7	7.8
Dependent Variable 2: Preferring FT products						
not agree at all	–	–	–	–	10.3	15.5
rather not agree	–	–	–	–	27.7	29.4
rather agree	–	–	–	–	43.5	41.9
totally agree	–	–	–	–	18.5	13.2

Notes: WTP = Willingness to Pay. Distribution of answer categories is based on weighted data (see FN 7).

Only the 2008 and 2010 surveys included the second dependent variable.

Note a in Table 1 applies to the differences in the wording of the answer categories across surveys.

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Autorenvorstellung

Veronika A. Andorfer, geb. 1983 in Dachau. Studium der Kulturwissenschaften mit Schwerpunkt Soziologie und Politikwissenschaft in Leipzig. Seit 2010 als wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin am Fachgebiet Soziologie Ländlicher Räume, Universität Kassel.

Forschungsschwerpunkte: Konsum- und Umweltsoziologie; ethischer Konsum; Experimente in den Sozialwissenschaften. Wichtigste Publikationen: *Research on Fair Trade Consumption – A Review*, *Journal of Business Ethics* 106, 2012 (mit U. Liebe); *Do Contexts Matter for Willingness to Donate to Natural Disaster Relief? An Application of the Factorial Survey, Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly (Online First) 2012* (mit G. Otte).